



POLICE COMMISSION

MINUTES OF DECEMBER 3, 2014 REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

Manchester Police Department
405 Valley Street
Manchester, NH 03103

The Regular Monthly Meeting was held at Police Headquarters on December 3, 2014 at 09:05 hours. **Present** were Comm. Mark Roy (Chairman), Comm. Woullard Lett, Comm. Eva Castillo-Turgeon, Chief David Mara, Assistant Chief Nick Willard, Capt. Jonathan Hopkins, Capt. Shawn Fournier, Capt. James Flanagan, Capt. Carlo Capano, Lt. Maureen Tessier, Lt. Jim Soucy, and Kim Demers (Secretary). **Absent** was Comm. William Clifford.

1. NOTICES POSTED / APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- The Commission was advised that the notices had been posted at City Hall, the City Library, as well as on the MPD's website homepage, event calendar, and blog.
- Commissioners unanimously approved the minutes of the November 5, 2014, meeting.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

- There was no one from the Public present.

3. DIVISIONAL REPORTS

Special Enforcement Division – Capt. Fournier:

- Nov. 7, SWAT Team called out to a Hooksett residence to effect the arrest of a suspect of a shooting incident that occurred in Manchester during the early-morning hours of Nov. 7. After three hours of negotiating with the suspect in an attempt to have him surrender, the subject took his own life by a self-inflicted gunshot.
- Nov. 13, with assistance from Federal and State agencies, Operation Fall Cleanup brought about the arrests of 33 out of 35 targeted low to mid-level drug dealers within the city.
- Nov. 20, SWAT Team had training at the Sig Sauer Academy in Epping, NH. The training included use of the new gas masks the Team recently acquired.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Comm. Roy congratulated Capt. Fournier on all the drug dealer arrests.

Legal Division – Lt. Tessier:

- The video arraignments are going well and overall a positive change for the department. There have been some glitches that needed to be worked out. Because the court is looking to do as few in-person arraignments as possible, the Hillsborough County jail has had to amend their paperwork processing. Additionally, hospital arraignments are now done via phone versus a judge appearing before the suspect in the hospital room.
- Officer Lucas Hobbs is currently attending prosecutor training. He will be able to substitute when the current prosecutor is out on illness or vacation.
- The Sex Offender Compliance Unit had an unusual spike in non-compliant offenders (14) during November. SOCU Officer Desmarais has been tracking down the non-compliant subjects and a number of them have been incarcerated on other offenses. Grant funding through the U.S. Marshal's Service will be utilized to conduct compliance checks.
- Joshua's Law goes into effect on January 1. The law was enacted in response to the father-son murder-suicide that occurred at the YWCA in August 2013 during a parent visitation. The law will not affect the way officers currently handle domestic violence-related arrests, but will allow a specific designation of a domestic violence offense.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Comm. Lett inquired how Joshua's Law would have affected the outcome of the YMCA incident if the law had been in effect at the time. Lt. Tessier stated that New Hampshire is one of only 15 states that did not have a domestic violence law. For instance, simple assault occurring during a domestic situation may or may not be documented as a DV-related incident and therefore would not necessarily prohibit someone from purchasing a gun in this or any other state. Chief Mara advised that there is no law that would have prevented the tragic situation that occurred at the YWCA.
- Comm. Roy inquired if Joshua's Law will affect how officers write reports. Lt. Tessier responded that officers currently do articulate in their reports that a situation was domestic related, however they may have to cite the actual statute in the report.

Patrol Division – Capt. Hopkins:

- JAG grant funding has been beneficial to the Patrol Division, allowing the purchase of active-shooter vests and first-aid kits that include tourniquets. The vests, containing metal plates, will provide an extra layer of protection when a street officer is first to respond to a shooting incident. A vest is stored in the trunk of each cruiser and is worn over the officers' uniform. Each cruiser is also equipped with the new first-aid kits.
- As of January, there will be two K9 Unit vacancies. Two replacement officers are to be identified and it is yet undecided if the two officers will be sent to the Boston K9 Academy or if MPD will host its own training course. K9 training currently includes drug detection and Capt. Hopkins hopes to expand the training to include gun detection.
- Shift change occurs January 6. Most officers got their first choice of assignment.
- Patrol officers have been benefitting from a number of training classes, mostly due to Chief Mara setting aside funding to cover the overtime costs associated with hiring one officer to replace another officer attending training.
- The Traffic Unit will be covering the last of the 2014 community events this weekend with the Christmas Parade and the Santa Shuffle road race. The Unit does an exceptional job assisting with organizing and providing police coverage at 60-plus annual events within the city.
- The four certified officers hired in September have completed their field training and have been assigned to the 4-12 shift from now till the January shift change. Fourteen officers will be graduating from the NH academy soon and will be assigned field training in the latter part of December, with completion in late January.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Chief Mara stated that allowing an officer to attend training is extremely important so that the officers are up to date on current procedures. Attending training allows an officer to return to the PD with some good ideas and in turn may present new ideas to Administration for potential implementation at MPD. Not all changes are feasible, but recently ideas presented by Officers Knight, Barter, and Krawczyk brought about the purchase of active-shooter vests, implementing predictive policing, and setting up and implementing the MPD Intranet.
- Chief Mara advised as exciting as it is for the MPD to have 18 new officers within its ranks, there will be only a net gain of nine officers on the street. Recent retirements and promotions to be effective in January have necessitated the reassignment of sworn personnel to various positions within the divisions.
- Comm. Roy commented that he did a recent ride-along and was impressed with the professionalism of the officer while responding to a call for service.

Community Policing Division – Lt. Soucy:

- The city's Neighborhood Enhancement Team is streamlining its efforts in monitoring abandoned property in the city. Kevin Kincaid at the City Clerk's office will maintain a database of properties.
- Coffee with a Cop initiative continues: an event was recently held at the Bridge Café.
- The Crime Prevention officer has completed gun safety and bullying presentations at 8-10 elementary schools, and has done Internet Safety presentations for middle school parents.
- MPD recently hosted a meeting of the Interfaith Clergy Association.
- As part of the Urban Violence initiative, Officer Linstad will be applying for grant funding to sponsor an after-school basketball program for teens from February to May.
- CP officers have attended the Teen Night program offered by the Salvation Army, which has been very successful.
- Alcohol compliance checks will begin in January. The department received funding to run the program.
- Due to a spate of car break-ins, several CP officers have been canvassing the downtown and millyard areas showing a photo of a potential suspect of the crimes. Officers Karoul and Battistelli made contact with one individual who was able to provide information as to the identity of the suspect.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Comm. Lett commented that he had recently a TV segment by MPD officers advising holiday safety tips. Lt. Soucy confirmed that Officers Ampuja and Rondeau did do a presentation on the local Manchester TV station. WZID was also scheduled to do a live interview.
- Comm. Roy inquired if there was currently an officer assigned to the Mall of N.H., as had been the practice in the past. Chief Mara advised that manpower does not allow an officer to be specifically assigned to the Mall. However, the Mall does hire a detail officer for Friday and Saturday.

Administrative Division – Capt. Capano:

- The Training Unit has been very busy. A entry-level police officer test was conducted at the NH Police Academy on November 8. Out of 140 applicants, 41 failed to show for the exam. After all aspects of the process, the department has a list of 37 to begin background investigations on.
- Four certified officers are currently in various phases of the hiring process.

- A Sergeants Promotional Exam was administered on November 5. Seventeen officers passed the exam.
- Training has also been busy with conducting a variety of mandatory training classes for sworn personnel.
- Aramark has been working out extremely well with regard to building maintenance.
- MPD along with DPW will be running a fundraiser by selling pavers, tree markers and benches.
- Two new dispatchers will be hired the second week of December; however, one dispatcher resigned in November, which will still leave one vacant dispatcher position.
- Through the work of Crime Statistics Officer Barter and Sgt. Grant, the department was awarded a \$50,000 grant for the Urban Violence initiative. The grant will be announced at a press conference in the near future.
- Fourteen recruits hired in July will graduate from the NH Police Academy on December 12. The recruits will return to the PD for some additional in-house training before beginning field training on December 22. Their field training will be completed at the end of January at which time they will be assigned to the street.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Chief Mara advised that the Safe Neighborhoods grant money will fund various initiatives through the Urban Violence Working Group directed at curbing gun violence, gang violence and allow specific hotspot patrols. After success in these areas, Chief Mara hopes to acquire funding to educate kids on the importance of getting jobs to earn money, rather than falling to a crime. He hopes to work with private and commercial partners who will step forward to offer jobs to the kids.
- The recent police officer exam had very low numbers for female and minority applicants. The department has had some success in the past, but something has to be done to draw more female and minority applicants to take the test.
- Comm. Castillo commented that a lot of ethnic groups have had bad experiences with police in their own countries. She suggested that the department needs to start very young-aged children and provide police-contact events to show that policemen are not bad.
- Comm. Roy suggested that some program needs to be developed to fill the 6-8 year age gap between the Police Explorer age group and the 21-year age for hiring.
- Comm. Roy inquired what age bracket the Chief envisioned for the jobs program. Chief Mara stated 16 to 19-year-olds.

Investigative Division – Capt. Flanagan:

- The Juvenile Unit has been investigating a case of twin nine-year-old African boys who were left unattended for three months while their parents traveled back to Africa. The parents had left the boys in the care of an uncle who was supposed to move in with the boys. This did not happen; the uncle had very little contact with the children and dropped off food occasionally. When school started, the boys got themselves to school everyday and the neglect came to light when the boys told their teacher. The uncle is being charged with endangering the welfare of the children.
- The Juvenile Unit took possession of some Celebrate electronic forensics equipment that will aid in processing phones for information.
- The Domestic Violence Unit is preparing for the Joshua's Law to go into effect, and will provide training to the sworn members.
- Through the collaborative effort of Patrol, Community Policing and Special Enforcement, a suspect in the rash of car break-ins was recently identified. There were two suspects, one of which was arrested. However, due to low bail set by the judge, the suspect was able to get out and begin breaking into cars again. The subject was rearrested, but was able to make bail again. Since then the subject has moved to another community. There are warrants in effect for the second suspect. Since the suspect's photo was broadcast by local media, the number of break-ins has gone down.
- Several Investigative Division personnel will be promoted in January, necessitating reassignment of other personnel to the division.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Comm. Roy inquired if there is anything the Commissioners can do to put pressure on the judges to set higher bail for offenders, especially those who are repeat offenders. Chief Mara advised that there is very little that can be done.

Assistant Chief Willard:

- The department's reaccreditation assessment begins on Sunday, 12/7 and the assessors will be at the PD through Wednesday, 12/10.
- On November 20, Chief Mara received the Disproportionate Minority Contact Leadership award from the State Advisory Group on Juvenile Justice in recognition of his exemplary contributions in aiding the State in the advancement of statewide efforts to reduce disproportionate minority contact.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Comm. Roy inquired when all the awards/plaques the department receives would be put on display. Chief Mara stated that was part of the project to be funded by sale of the pavers and benches. The funds raised by the sales will be used to properly frame and hang historical mementos on the walls throughout the building. Rooms within the building will be dedicated to each of MPD's fallen officers and will display photos and memorabilia from each officer.

Chief Mara:

- Chief Mara stated that there has been a 6-7% overall decrease in crime in 2014, compared to 2013. He has set goals to achieve a similar reduction in 2015.
- A swearing-in ceremony for the promotions of 2 captains, 5 lieutenants and 5 sergeants will take place on January 5, 2015, 10:00 a.m., at the MPAL / Officer Briggs Center located at the corner of Beech and Lake.

Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Comm. Roy inquired when the 2016 FY budget sessions will begin. Chief Mara advised discussions have already begun.

4. RETIREMENTS / RESIGNATIONS

- Dispatcher Kathryn Flynn resigned effective 11/30/14, after serving with MPD since 1/26/09. She took a position with Hooksett PD.
- Officer Din Jenkins, Sr., resigned effective 12/1/14, after serving with MPD since 11/19/12. He took a position with Stoughton, MA PD.
- Officer Erland "Jason" Torrey resigned effective 12/9/14, after serving with MPD since 11/19/12. He took a position with the Las Vegas PD.

5. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING / MOTION TO

The date of the next commission meeting was set for:

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2015, AT 09:00 HOURS

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 10:05 hours.

6. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING / MOTION TO ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Commission entered Executive Session at 10:05 hours. The content of the session shall remain confidential

Respectfully submitted by:
Kim Demers, Secretary

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